Strategy Research Project

Commitment of Force: Employing Force as an Instrument of Power

by

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

COMMITMENT OF FORCE:
EMPLOYING FORCE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POWER

by

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This research project examines the effective commitment of military force as an instrument of power to achieve national security objectives and pursue the national interests. The United States Government needs to establish definitive principles to evaluate and ensure the proper use of military force as part of its foreign policy. The purpose is to provide a defined doctrine that provides a cogent framework in which United States policy makers can judiciously use force in pursuit of national interests, and in a manner that preserves national security, maintains international order, and promotes United States credibility. Based on the current international environment and variety of threats facing the nation, this paper offers a doctrine to complement the *National Security Strategy* and establish a clear rationale for the employment of force as an instrument of national policy. It recommends a set of principles to help guide the use of force and not merely restrict it; it establishes criteria to assist policy makers in the decision on when to use military force in order to protect United States interests and achieve national security objectives.

COMMITMENT OF FORCE: EMPLOYING FORCE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POWER

> In deliberating on this Question it was impossible to forget, that History, our own experience, the advice of our ablest Friends in Europe, the fears of the Enemy, and even the Declarations of Congress demonstrate, that on our Side the War should be defensive. It has even been called a War of Posts. That we should on all occasions avoid a general Action, or put anything to the Risque, unless compelled by necessity, into which we ought never to be drawn.
>
> —George Washington [1]

What is the purpose of war? Carl von Clausewitz explained in his treatise *On War* that "war is merely the continuation of policy by other means."[2] History, for the most part, has validated his premise as nations over the centuries have pursued war and committed military force in support of their national interests and polices. This is seldom undertaken as the sole instrument of national power, but is most often conducted in concert with the other components of statecraft (the diplomatic, economic, and information instruments). Accepting the premise that nations have a responsibility to protect their citizens and their interests, the compelling issue is under what circumstances is it appropriate to employ force as an instrument of power*?*

The world has significantly changed since the turn of the century. As the United States continues to distance itself from the Cold War, it also distances itself from the polar world it created with the demise of its main adversary, the Soviet Union. Many theorists have offered views on the nature of this change as well as what they believe the future of American power will entail. While their outlooks are often debated, there is no debate that the world itself is a vastly different place with a complex set of international security challenges. With the end of the Cold War, the advance of technology, the globalization of commerce, and the rise of non-state actors, antiquated

paradigms of international relations may no longer be sufficient for succeeding in today's strategic environment. Within this new and changing landscape, the United States must continue to protect the sovereignty of the nation and to secure its interests, when necessary, through the commitment of military force.

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has adjusted its foreign policy to confront the challenges of the dynamic and complex international environment. During this period, United States policy makers have waded, and sometimes tumbled, through coercive diplomacy to the use of military force. The United States cannot continue to haphazardly commit the use of military force or find itself in situations where it is unprepared to fight or unable to succeed. As Sun Tzu warns, "those unable to understand the dangers inherent in employing troops are equally unable to understand the advantageous way of doing so."[3] The United States must follow a deliberate methodology when committing military force to achieve national security objectives, one that is consistent with its values and systematic in its approach.

Thesis

Based on the current international environment, challenges facing the nation, and prevalent nature of various threats of diverse intensity, the United States Government needs to establish definitive principles to evaluate and ensure the proper use of military force as part of its foreign policy. The purpose should be to provide a defined doctrine that provides a cogent framework in which United States policy makers can judiciously use force in pursuit of national interests, and in a manner that preserves national security, maintains international order, and promotes United States credibility. This step

is necessary not only to deal with the evolving world order but also to help shape the military force structure that will posture for future requirements.

Background and Historical Context

From America's inception as an independent nation, it has been leery of an aggressive military policy, but equally wary to abandon it, particularly since World War II. George Washington's warning in his "Farewell Address," cited above, and the American way of war has always been rooted in ideals but executed based on practical demands.[4] Over the years, the nation has struggled with the application and exercise of military force and has often vacillated between isolationism, or a determination not to become involved in major interstate wars, and interventionism. [5] This struggle has also been the source of serious debate in the nation's history.

Although there has been debate, it appears the United States, while perhaps reluctant, has always been willing to commit force if its interests, no matter how seemingly peripheral, are threatened. In the early 1800s, the United States sent forces to the Barbary Coast to defeat the pirates laying siege to merchant vessels. In the late 1800s, American troops were sent as part of an eight-nation coalition to China to defeat the Imperial Army and suppress the Boxer Rebellion. From its early years, America had established its willingness to commit force in order to secure what it perceived to be in its national interests. This position was again advanced as American policy, initially codified by President James Monroe during his state of the union address in 1823. The Monroe Doctrine, which derived from this address, declared American willingness to use force if necessary to control the American continent but also to protect its regional interests. This doctrine remains in many respects an anchor of American foreign policy.[6]

In the twentieth century, the United States continued to expand its interests and influence. By the end of World War II, the United States had become a global power, and made clear its willingness to employ force in order to secure its national interests abroad. In 1947, during a joint session of Congress, President Truman revealed a new American doctrine. The Truman Doctrine ended the United States' long held position towards isolationism and "committed the nation to a variety of interventionist policies and programs, from Western Europe to East Asia."[7]

During the ensuing Cold War, and with the strategy of containment, it appeared the United States was prepared to counter any act of aggression towards its interests or allies with force. However, in actuality, it was anything but clear on where and how the United States would use force to meet its policy objectives. Policy makers were more inclined to use the threat of force to maintain the balance of power between the West and East. Because of this, and as the United states emerged from a failed military intervention in Vietnam, two distinct views developed, which were grouped into the "all-or-nothing" versus the "*Limited War"* debate.[8]

The all-or-nothing position, which can be first attributed to General Douglas MacArthur during the Korean War, held that any potential crisis requiring military action should be responded to with decisive military force to achieve victory, or avoided altogether. [9] The limited war advocates, who emerged in the era of potential nuclear war, and fearful of the destructiveness of nuclear war, drew an opposite conclusion. They advocated the use of force in circumstances that could be limited in scale and objectives. In other words, they favored a strategy that limited the use and scope of military force in pursuit of political objectives. Along with the strategy of containment, the

limited war theorists believed the western democracies could avoid escalation to nuclear Armageddon but, at the same time, contain communism with the use of limited force, focused on limited operational objectives.[10]

Weinberger – Powell Doctrine

As Ronald Reagan assumed the presidency in 1981, he espoused a foreign policy philosophy that favored the resurgence of American military power.[11] However, the use of military power would be sharply debated even in his administration between Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and President Reagan's second Secretary of State, George Shultz. Shultz advocated a limited war strategy, using military force to counter what was viewed as aggressive expansion by the Soviet Union. He offered that the United States should back diplomacy with "credible threats of force and be willing to use military force on occasion if threats did not suffice."[12]

Weinberger believed in an opposing view. He represented the group of "All-or-Nothing" (or "Never Again") advocates, which attempted to define that the United States would never again commit to a limited war (or any military operation) unless it was certain the conditions were met for success. His opinions were heavily shaped by the Vietnam War and later cemented with the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983 (a deployment he opposed from the onset), which killed 241 American service members. The Marines were initially sent to Beirut to "establish a presence" while diplomatic effort attempted to negotiate a withdrawal of Israeli and Syrian troops from Lebanon. As the violence escalated, Weinberger continued to voice his opposition to the deployment because it did not have a clear military mission or objective and was unlikely to resolve the dispute in the region.[13]

A year later, in 1984, in a speech at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, Weinberger outlined conditions that he believed were designed to determine the viability of the use of military force. He unveiled these conditions amidst the American public's growing concerns of possible U.S. military involvement in insurgency-torn El Salvador.[14] The Weinberger Doctrine, the name the press gave his tenets, established principles to be validated by an administration before the commitment of US military force to combat operations or instances where such likelihood existed. Weinberger articulated six criteria:

- The United States should not commit force unless it is deemed vital to its national interests or its allies.
- Intervention must happen wholeheartedly with a clear intention of winning.
- There must be clearly defined political and military objectives.
- The relationship between the objectives and force must be continually reassessed and adjusted as necessary.
- There must be reasonable assurance that the American people and Congress will support the intervention.
- Commitment of U.S. Forces to combat should be the last resort.

This doctrine placed severe constraints on when, where, and how the United States should use military force. It was born of the failure to achieve policy objectives in Vietnam and the failed intervention in Lebanon. As Weinberger stated, he was determined to avoid a "gradualist incremental approach" to the use of military force.[15] Later, General Colin Powell as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1989-1993) embraced this doctrine and added a corollary, which called for quick and decisive

victory with minimal loss of life. Powell advocated that “war should be the politics of last resort.”[16] Thus, the Weinberger–Powell Doctrine, as it became known, established pre-conditions for the use of force; it was used to impose limitations on the use of force, while establishing policy requirements necessary before using force. In essence, the doctrine did more to limit the use of force, rather than establish a generic framework on when and how military force should be used.

Nonetheless, the Weinberger–Powell doctrine had an almost immediate effect. During the 1991 Gulf War, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Powell applied the principles to articulate and shape the military objectives in removing Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The success of the operation can be attributed in part to the shaping of the overall policy and objectives which were certainly a result of this doctrine. Powell commented on the success explaining that it was necessary to “have a clear political objective and stick to it,” and when committed, the United States should use all force necessary, “decisive force end wars quickly and in the long run saves lives.”[17]

Although President George H. W. Bush generally followed the advice of the Powell during Desert Strom, he had a much different view on the potential use of military force. Bush was looking to take advantage of the “New World Order.” His administration believed in an “enlightened realism,” and held that conflict would remain, even in an era of democratic peace. Its view was that “criminals and tyrants would forever seek to exploit cracks in the international order, and the rule of law so fundamental to democratic societies demanded enforcement.” [18] Bush promoted a theory of democratic peace that was best achieved by example, not through brute force, but also recognized that “harmonious and uniform societies required policing.” [19] He was

not necessarily opposed, however, to using military force in a limited way to achieve national interests. Nonetheless, Bush "discounted the need for a fixed set of criteria to determine the use of military force, stating that each case is unique and requires judgment."[20]

As a new presidential administration came to office in 1993, nearly two years after the fall of the Soviet Union, so did a new foreign policy. The new world order was effectually a new world reality, one that saw the integration of commerce and economics like never before. This integration led to both economic and political globalization.[21] Seizing on these new world dynamics, the Clinton administration ushered a policy to embrace free market and trade.[22] While this approach would initiate debate about what was, and was not, vital to United States interests, it was clear that the new administration had moved away from a policy of containment to one of "Democratic Enlargement."[23] By this point, the Weinberger–Powell Doctrine lost much of its influence over policy makers, and no longer appeared to be a viable test, as the nation moved to occupy itself (and its military) with a strategy on "Engagement and Enlargement."

Les Aspin, who would later become Clinton's Secretary of Defense, described the Weinberger–Powell Doctrine as antiquated and not permissive enough to authorize the use of military force in the new era.[24] With significant challenges of democratization, globalization, and humanitarian crisis, the Clinton administration had a capable military force and was determined to use it. However, the disaster of the humanitarian mission in Somalia, which the Bush administration had initiated, and more specifically, the fiasco in Mogadishu, which resulted in 18 dead and 84 wounded service members, gave pause. The event also led to a revision of an impending policy document, Presidential

Decision Directive Number 25 (PDD 25), which later "incorporated Weinberger Doctrine-type conditions …on the use of American military force in UN peace operations."[25] However, only a few years later, in Bosnia and more clearly in Kosovo, the Clinton administration would stray far from the Weinberger–Powell doctrine. It was clear that it was willing to use force in limited wars to attain the objectives incorporated in its policy of "Engagement and Enlargement."

With the events of September 11, 2011, a new president, George W. Bush, would begin to chart another path for the use of military force. After the Al-Qaida attacks, the United States would aggressively pursue military action to defend itself against future acts of terrorism. It would also pursue a policy of preemptive military action (more accurately preventive action), to protect the nation. The 2002 *National Security Strategy* formalized the United States commitment to use preemptive military force if necessary to defend the United States, its allies, and secure national interests.[26]

Today's Environment

Today, and for the foreseeable future, there is no direct threat to the territorial sovereignty of the United States. Furthermore, the concept of industrial war has faded and potentially no longer exists. [27] The current *National Security Strategy* characterizes the potential challenges and threats facing the United States in an environment where: "Wars over ideology have given way to wars over religious, ethnic, and tribal identity; nuclear dangers have proliferated; inequality and economic instability have intensified; damage to our environment, food insecurity, and dangers to public health are increasingly shared; and the same tools that empower individuals to build enable them to destroy."[28]

The threats to the United States are best defined as those that challenge our interests abroad, destabilize regional security, and have an adverse effect on United States global interests. As the international environment has changed, so must the principles and doctrines used to operate within this environment; the United States must reevaluate how it uses military forces to advance and protect its interests. In the past, the Weinberger–Powell doctrine was used to limit intervention to specific military purposes, by calling for the use of overwhelming force and preventing intervention until clear, attainable military goals were established.[29] As we moved past the Cold War, one criticism of the doctrine is that the "principles and the ethos" it represents has "become an obstacle to using military force with utility." [30] However, the concept of employing a set of guiding principles should not be completely discarded. While the landscape has changed, there remains validity in establishing a set of principles, within the construct of the current international environment, in which to guide the use of military force as part of foreign policy.

As the United States pursues its security interests, it must be judicious in the application of hard power and the exercise of military force. In doing so, the principles offered below will assist policy makers and ensure the appropriate use of force in today's environment.

Recommendations

Definitive Purpose. There must be a well-defined purpose for any assigned military operation in support of national strategy and interests. This purpose should be clearly linked to United States interests and the overall security of the United States; the purpose, once achieved, should directly lead to successfully attaining the overall policy

objectives and security interests. The purpose should be well understood and articulated to the national audience, military force, and international partners alike. In general, policy makers must be able to clearly define a national security interest that, when analyzed, can be solved through the application of military force.

This first test is not meant to restrict the use of force, but rather to define it use. As Clausewitz identified, war is “a political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried out by other means.”[31] If force is going to be used as a “means” there needs to be a clearly defined “ends” for it to be applied against. The purpose should be clearly linked to securing and defending the United States and its citizens, or advancing United States interests. The purpose can also include defending the interests of partners and allies as part of current treaties and agreements, and as part of our commitment to international organizations (e.g., the United Nations).

As part of defining the purpose of using force, there must be an evaluation of the intensity of the national interest to ensure that there is a valid purpose, which would compel the commitment of military force. While defending the United States and citizens is clearly a principle duty of government, it is more difficult to define lesser interests that may require the commitment of military force. The Weinberger–Powell doctrine required the issue to be determined “vital” to United States interests. This task in itself can become a difficult chore because such a concept does not have specific criteria. Further, this evaluation should not necessarily require the interest to be classified into a specific category (survival, vital, major, or peripheral).[32] Instead, it would be better to use these categories to determine the level of resolve the United States is willing to pursue. Similarly, America’s adversaries will likely do the same; they will determine the

level of their interests and America's likely resolve to commit force. Any attempt to coerce with the threat of force, will only be credible if there is a clear purpose and perceived willingness to use force.

Strategic Aim. There should be clear strategic aims (military objectives), which, when accomplished, will lead to attaining the nation's foreign policy goals. Further, there must be well-articulated and defined aims that can be achieved by a military force that will lead directly to successful conflict termination. Absent this, it would be futile to use force, and consequently, the issue would be best managed using other elements of power (to include political negotiation and / or stalemate).

Additionally, military forces must be given, or develop, clearly defined objectives. They must be able to understand the strategic aims and how the military operation will successfully attain them. Similar to identifying the purpose, there should be an evaluation of end, ways, and means, to ensure the military means are adequate to accomplish the required end. There must also be an understanding of the role of military force and to what extent it accomplishes (or supports the accomplishment) of the overall policy objectives.

Lastly, the political leadership should conduct an evaluation to ensure that the nation's policy aims cannot be accomplished more effectively using other instruments of power. Likewise, the military objectives needs to be linked (and nested) with the other instruments of national power to achieve the required effect. This is not to suggest that military force cannot be used in support of a diplomatic effort (e.g., coercive diplomacy, threat of force, military engagement), rather it is to identify that the military force needs to have clear objectives of its own that will support the attainment of U.S. policy goals.

Clear Understanding of the Threat / Enemy. The main purpose of a military force, when committed, is to defeat the nation's enemies to achieve national objectives. There must be a clear understanding of the nature of the threat or the capabilities of the enemy for which force is being applied. In addition, there should be a clear understanding of the threat against U.S. interests (and its allies, if appropriate) and the military's role in countering or defeating that threat.

It is easy to believe that American superiority (advanced equipment, training, and technology) can compensate for a variety of conditions the United States military may face because of past success. However, historic and poignant lessons, from Vietnam and Somalia to Afghanistan and Iraq, should inject a note of caution for the United States not to be so eager to underestimate the environment, and capacity and resiliency of the threat. The enemy, its capabilities and resources, and its willingness to defend itself through any means available, must be closely scrutinized when determining to commit U.S. forces.

Recent lessons from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan compel policy makers to understand the full nature of the pending conflict. As an example, the issues arising from the operational difficulties in Iraq and Afghanistan are not those associated with counterinsurgency tactics, but instead, those concerning strategy, to include an understanding that there are limits to United States military power.[33] As the United States approaches future operations of this nature, it must be mindful that "such conflicts will inevitably be strictly limited for the United States, whereas for its enemies, they will often approach absolute warfare."[34]

When committing U.S. forces, policymakers must weigh the potential outcomes against the threat; that is, the threat in any operation must be calculated and understood. There must be a clear understanding of the enemy and a confidence that the forces applied will be able to defeat the enemy and accomplish the mission with reasonable risk.

Legitimacy of Mission. In today's international environment, the accomplishment of a strategic objective will require United States force and actions to be seen as legitimate, acting within the parameters of accepted treaties or international law. This important requisite enables the nation to maintain public support (domestic and international) and ensure those enduring values and interests, that the United States promotes, remain intact.

Just because the United States can execute military operations does not necessarily mean the United States should undertake such missions. The United States has been without a true peer competitor since the fall of the Soviet Union. This "unipolar moment" can lead to the excessive or irresponsible use of military force, especially if there is no "test" required to evaluate its efficacy or whether it meets the criteria associated with the just war tradition. When political leaders conclude that the use of military force can be undertaken without consequence from any adversary or the international community, such a belief may be more dangerous than if there were severe consequences to consider before acting.

During the recent Bush administration, there was a significant change in U.S. policy that promoted preventive military intervention. The United States established a precedent for preventive action as opposed to preemptive action. This was the most

significant “reformulation of United States grand strategy in over half a century.”[35] Preventive war is characterized as solving the problem before it becomes a crisis and is “the product of calculation, a strategic moment of launching an optimum first strike against a weaker power before it has the chance to grow stronger.”[36] Preventive war is cast differently than the concept of preemptive war, which is seen as justified by international law since a nation “faces as imminent threat that is otherwise unavoidable.”[37]

Experts view preemptive war as legitimate as opposed to preventive war since it meets three criteria of international law for the use of force. First is necessity, which requires “all reasonable alternatives to the use of force be exhausted.” Second is proportionality, which “limits any defensive action to that necessary to defeat an ongoing attack or to deter or to prevent a future attack.” The last criterion is imminence, which requires “an exhaustion of remedies component with a requirement for a very high reasonable expectation of future attacks – an expectation that is much more than mere speculation.”[38]

It is a dangerous proposition when a nation can pursue a policy of military action without being required to analyze the effects that it may have, and without suffering any immediate consequence. Additionally, using military force in ways that are not viewed as legitimate, such as in preventive war, may have the unintended consequence of galvanizing concern of growing United States hegemonic power. In response, those regimes opposed to United States power may seek to counter through various means to include the development of nuclear weapons.[39]

Application of Adequate Resource. When operationally committed, United States military forces should be provided sufficient resources to accomplish their assigned task decisively. While analyzing the overall aims and enemy threat, the United States should commit the necessary resources to allow the military commanders the full capability to accomplish the mission. Along with this requirement, consideration must be given to the resources and capabilities the enemy will mobilize in order to calculate proper resource estimates.[40]

Military forces must have adequate resources to achieve the objectives within acceptable risk. Recent operations have shown that the United States is "ill-equipped to do effective and long-term nation building, that military incursions must be limited and that they must be combined with a clear and realistic political objective."[41] Previously, Powell demanded a test of overwhelming force as part of the doctrine. This ensured, from a Never-Again perspective, that military forces would have the essential resources necessary to mitigate risk and to preserve, as can possibly be achieved during these operations, the lives of U.S. military personnel. While there is no guaranteed formula for success before the commitment of force, there must be a commitment of resources to ensure the successful accomplishment of the military objectives.

In the future, as in past wars, the United States will require the support of its allies – politically, economically, and militarily. Even granting continued United States hegemony, the "American state, for all its great military strength, cannot alone project the power necessary to control even the principal wars which the West wishes to manage."[42] However, preventive war will likely place a heavier burden on U.S. forces since many states consider such actions as illegitimate and therefore, the United States

is less likely to find coalition partners willing to share the burden in these types of ventures.

Resolution of National Will. The commitment of military force abroad is a significant matter that has the potential for long lasting and broad impact across the nation that is sending its forces into harm's way. Because of this, military action should be supported by the American people and (by law) should be supported by the United States Congress. As a republic, it is necessary that the U.S. government judiciously exercise the use of force; the political leadership should ensure they are exercising this power accordingly and that military missions embarked upon is consistent with the will of the people.

Requiring a deliberate doctrinal framework or a set of principles for the commitment of force and an obligation to justify the use of force enhances the "democratic character of American foreign policy by reinforcing the legitimate role of public opinion and Congress in the political process of taking the nation to war."[43] Meeting such a standard will require the president and policy makers to clarify and reaffirm the principles upon which the policy to commit force rests, to include material interests as well as moral values.[44] Clausewitz's trinity, identified in his treatise *On War*, established the requirement to strike a balance between the "the people; …the commander and his army; …the government."[45] The lessons of the failed mission in Somalia reinforce this concept, the requirement for popular support and a clear link to commitment and interests.[46]

Validation of Consequence of Action (Inaction). There should be an assessment and confirmation that the military actions, and potential consequences and risks hold a

far greater benefit for United States future prosperity than inaction would provide. When committing to a military endeavor, the United States should be assured that the potential gains are worth the risk of military force; that the desired outcome of the conflict is worth the resources invested in money, equipment, and lives. The world, and United States interests, must result in a substantially better peace because of our military actions.

Ideally, military force is used as a last resort. With the development of strong international organizations and regional security initiatives, there are global mechanisms to promote peace and security. Nevertheless, the United States must be prepared when this system fails (or is unwilling to act collectively) to use force to secure its own interests or those of its allies. The United States has a robust military capability that can and should be used to pursue its interests as necessary. It should be done in a manner consistent with United States policy and values, and to promote United States engagement.

The outcome of the military action must also be viewed from the perspective of the adversary; it must be determined if the risk of not complying with the threat and potential use of force is a better option based on the adversary's values and national interests. If there is a threat of force, the adversary will determine if they will commit force to defend their interests; identify the risk if they oppose; and determine if they are better or worse when compared to continuing its actions.[47] If the cost for an adversary to comply is greater than they perceive it is worth, then the threat of force is unlikely to compel the adversary to submit to United States demands.

The commitment of force (or the threat of force) should be perceived, both internally and externally, as necessary to achieve a victory, or an outcome that is better for national security than the existing situation. The simple outcome of any conflict should be to establish a better peace, to paraphrase Basil Liddell Hart.[48]

Conversely, not using military force could be just as detrimental to the nation and its credibility and prestige. In line with national values, there may be times when force is committed to secure the peace through stability or peace operations, or to prevent "human suffering and allowing the potential of proliferating humanitarian crisis."[49] To be certain, there may be times when limited force is required, but under these circumstances, there should still be a deliberate approach for the commitment of force. There should be "rigorous consideration of cost and benefits, as well as national interests before such force is employed."[50]

Conclusion

In today's strategic environment, it is well recognized that the United States will need to employ force as part of its overall strategy to protect and promote a variety of interests, and it must do so in concert with the other elements of national power. The nature of conflict today and in the future will be more complicated and present vast threats to counter United States hegemony. In recent years, it has become increasingly easier for the United States to employ force based on its relative power. However, just because it is easier, doesn't mean the United States should commit force less judiciously, without due consideration of the elements above.

A coherent doctrine is potentially viewed as an attempt to restrict the use force, and will limit the options (and draw criticism) from those who favor a more interventionist

foreign policy, such as the so-called “liberal hawks and the neoconservatives.”[51] As with the Weinberger–Powell doctrine, the liberal internationalist who favor the use of military intervention were not pleased that it precluded humanitarian intervention. For the neoconservatives, the doctrine was anathema since it precluded wars of choice and limited transformative military conflicts.[52] The argument between the Never Again supporters and limited-war theorists was always based on a false dichotomy. Perhaps this in itself is justification for a doctrine – to maintain a moderate view and allow for a deliberate discussion of the tenets when committing force. The previously described set of principles is not intended to prohibit the use in any specific case, but to establish a mechanism to define the pragmatic and legitimate use of force based on United States interests and values.

Based on Clausewitz’s teachings, “No one starts a war – or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war, and how he intends to conduct it.”[53] The strategic framework above provides policy makers a coherent strategy for the use of force and a set of principles to guide the decision for the commitment military force. It is consistent with the American way of war and balances the use of force with national interests and with democratic values. As Weinberger noted decades ago, and his point is still relevant, “We face a spectrum of threats – from covert aggression, terrorism, and subversion, to overt intimidation, to use of brute force – choosing the appropriate level of our response is difficult. Flexible response does not mean just any response is appropriate.”[54]

As the United States pursues policies and strategies to protect its interests across the globe, it must do so with a clear understanding of the impact of its actions. It

must continue to use force to pursue its security, but it must do so in a manner that is consistent with United States values, goals, and long-term objectives. Additionally, the United States must realize that it is a powerful nation in a new era. It faces a world that no longer presents the nation with a simple choice of deploying a large conventional force or no force at all. Thus, it is imperative that the United States revaluate its methods and principles so that it effectively commits a force that is capable of defending its national interests.

Endnotes

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